



The WaterFirst Community Program

The WaterFirst Community Program is an innovative effort designed to address myriad water issues and encourage and assist communities in making real progress in water resource protection and stewardship. Addressing the complex and challenging water issues that exist within the state is not an easy task. Because of the increased attention that must be paid to our waters, the Department of Community Affairs implemented and designed WaterFirst to recognize and reward local governments for going above and beyond the minimum planning and environmental compliance requirements for managing water resources. The program not only provides recognition and financial incentives to qualifying communities, it also offers technical assistance to local governments



across the state. WaterFirst is a proactive approach to water resources and seeks to help communities make the connection between land use, water quality, and quantity. Working toward the designation is an important step that communities can take to protect water resources for both environmental and economic benefits.

The WaterFirst Program, in its initial form, was born out of the Georgia Water Management Campaign and brought to DCA.¹ DCA convened a broad stakeholder committee that met several times prior to the launch of the program to determine, first, if the program was needed; and second if the requirements and criteria for designation were suitable. The committee fully agreed this was not only an excellent effort, but the
See WaterFirst, page 7

Solid Waste Trust Fund

Before 1992, scrap tire dumps were common across Georgia, and some were huge. They were started by entrepreneurs who were paid by businesses for removing old tires. The piles grew as tire dealers rid themselves of about 6 million old tires each year. Some tires collectors were hopeful that the tires could be recycled, but many piles were abandoned when no markets developed. The dumps became breeding grounds for mosquitoes and sometimes spawned spectacular fires that burned for weeks, contaminating the air and water.

The Solid Waste Trust Fund (SWTF) was created by legislation in 1992 to clean up the tire dumps that had accumulated for decades, to prevent

new dumps, and to provide tire retailers with a viable scrap tire recycling industry. The SWTF was also intended to fund the mitigation of hazards at abandoned landfills, research innovative solid waste technologies, assist local governments with their waste disposal and recycling programs, help educate Georgia's citizens about solid waste issues, and provide for enforcement action against violators of solid waste laws.

The SWTF has cleaned up approximately 8.3 million scrap tires at 484 illegal dumps. About 1.9 million scrap tires have been collected using grants to local governments. There are 49 sites remaining to be cleaned up.
See Trust Fund, page 6

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Solid Waste Planning	page 2
Transfer Station Survey	page 2
Winning Water	page 3
Chipper a Success	page 4
Earth's 911	page 4
Solid Waste Annual Report	page 5

Solid Waste Planning Standards Updated

A decade ago, solid waste management planning was a top priority for local officials across the state. Georgia had less than five years of remaining landfill disposal capacity and many parts of the state were struggling to provide adequate solid waste collection services. In 1990, the Solid Waste Management Act was adopted, requiring all local governments to prepare a Solid Waste Management Plan that:

- demonstrated a minimum of 10 years of solid waste disposal capacity,
- identified an environmentally sound solid waste collection system, and
- set forth a strategy that would help the state achieve its goal of a 25%

per capita reduction in the disposal of municipal solid waste.

Soon after the Act was adopted, the Minimum Planning Standards and Procedures for Solid Waste Management were enacted. These Standards provide guidance to local governments as they prepare and update their Solid Waste Management Plan.

Much has changed in the solid waste arena since the original Minimum Planning Standards were adopted. Georgia's population continues to grow, and while over 450 local governments have implemented recycling programs, the state has fallen short of meeting its 25% waste disposal reduction goal. Many waste management services have been

privatized, and Georgia's increased disposal capacity is found in fewer, larger regional facilities.

To keep pace with these changes, DCA initiated a process to update the Minimum Planning Standards. The updated planning standards were adopted by the DCA board on August 13 and became effective on January 1, 2004. All local government Solid Waste Management Plans due after January 2004 must adhere to the updated planning standards.

The new standards can be found online at www.dca.state.ga.us/environmental/. For more information on solid waste management planning, contact Mary Harrington at mharring@dca.state.ga.us or 404-679-3144.

Waste Transfer Stations gaining popularity among governments

Local governments are increasingly turning to transfer stations to better manage their solid waste streams. Cities reporting use of transfer stations by themselves or their contractors climbed from 20 in 1996 to 143 in 2003, according to DCA's Solid Waste Annual Report. However, the number of waste transfer station permits in Georgia far exceeds the number of active, permitted solid waste transfer stations. Only about a third of the 230 transfer station permits issued by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division are currently being used to transfer solid waste. Many of the remaining permits correspond to sites that were never developed or are no longer in use. In other cases, permits correspond to companies handling medical waste, or a single facility may have been issued additional permits after changing ownership.

After numerous site visits, Office of Environmental Management staff compiled a listing of 73 active solid waste transfer stations statewide. As expected, many are in the metropolitan Atlanta area, but communities across the state have turned to transfer stations for economical waste disposal.

At a typical Georgia waste transfer station, rear-loading collection trucks dump their loads onto a smooth concrete floor inside a three-wall,

high-ceiling building, similar to an aircraft hangar. A front-end loader then pushes the waste against and over a short wall and into an open-top tractor trailer. A typical tractor-trailer can hold the contents of up to five rear-loader collection trucks filled with Municipal Solid Waste.

Higher tip fees paid at the transfer station are offset by reduced fuel and vehicle maintenance costs. Generally, waste hauling companies, local

governments or authorities consider sending collection trucks to transfer stations if their routes are more than 50 miles from a landfill. Terrain and traffic can significantly alter this radius.

For a copy of the transfer station spreadsheet and map, contact Joe Dunlop at jdunlop@dca.state.ga.us or 404-679-1598 or visit the Office of Environmental Management's Web site at www.dca.state.ga.us/environmental.



Environmental Stewardship Partners: Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation

While volunteers play a tremendous role in elevating the beauty and quality of life in Georgia communities, business and industry has an equally important role to play by supporting these efforts, and ensuring growth and economic development in the future. The Keep Georgia Beautiful Foundation (KGBF), founded in 1985, offers a mechanism for corporate participation in local quality of life issues. The Foundation is based on the fundamental premise that the environmental interests of the state of Georgia and the people who live here are best served when public and private interests work hand-in-hand to achieve common goals.

The KGB Foundation promotes private sector financial support for worthwhile educational programs that

are in line with the Keep Georgia Beautiful mission: *to build and sustain community environmental activities and behaviors, resulting in a more beautiful Georgia*. It is made up of a diverse group of public and private interests and individuals appointed by the DCA Commissioner.



Some of the environmental education

programs the Foundation supports include:

Keep Georgia Beautiful Awards Luncheon.

Student of the Year Award

Executive Director of the Year Award

Environmental Education Grants

The Georgia Great American Cleanup

Bring One for the Chipper Christmas Tree Recycling Program

Environmental Education Grants are awarded annually for local projects that are consistent with its mission. Projects that have been funded in the past can be found on the Foundation's Web site www.kgbf.org as well as application materials.

Recycling Guide to help schools 'Catch the Cycle'

In 2000, nearly 70 million tons of materials were recycled or composted in America, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Schools and institutions play a large role in recycling efforts across the country and within Georgia. Schools are logical places to recover large amounts of material, especially paper and beverage containers. Schools are not only great sources for recyclables, but more importantly, schools are springboards for social change. Once students have participated in a school

waste reduction program, the logical next step will often be the education of their family members. Students can be catalysts for household waste reduction.

DCA and its partners want to aid schools in the formation and maintenance of school-wide recycling programs through the creation of a recycling guide for Georgia schools, "Catch the Cycle." This guide is intended to assist student organizations, teachers, and school districts in implementing and maintaining recy-

cling programs. Four concise steps allow schools to reap the benefits of a school-recycling program. Schools can benefit from an environmentally literate student body and save and/or potentially earn money from a school waste reduction program.

The guide will also contain statewide contacts for school recycling programs. The school-recycling guide will be available this school year. For more information contact Suki Janssen, sjanssen@dca.state.ga.us or 404-679-3152.

Winning Water: Children's Water Festival

On Tuesday, March 23, 2004, the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, in partnership with other agencies and organizations, will host a daylong water festival on the campus of Columbus State University in Columbus. The event will feature hands-on water activities and lessons divided into four categories:

- drinking water
- water quality
- watersheds/surface water
- groundwater

Each class will attend a four-hour block or eight different activities.



Fourth grade classes from the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee, and Flint river basins are invited to attend. (*Don't know which river basin your school is in? You should! To find out, check out this map on DCA's Web site: <http://www.dca.state.ga.us/environmental/riverbasin4.jpg>*)

DCA needs dynamic volunteers to make this festival a success. If you are interested in volunteering at the festival, contact Suki Janssen at sjanssen@dca.state.ga.us or 404-679-3152.

Earth's 911 Coordinators Ready to Spread the Word

After two years of successful partnership between the State of Georgia and Earth's 911, a non-profit, international clearinghouse for public environmental information, the Department of Community Affairs has invited local communities to take a more active role in this valuable service to citizens. Designated Earth's 911 outreach coordinators may now go to www.earth911.org and obtain a password that will enable them to enter the system's user interface (UI). The UI allows local coordinators to add or modify local information on the Web site and 1-800-CLEANUP phone directory hotline through their user-friendly Web site. By granting local UI privileges, it is hoped that the use of the site will continue to grow and serve as a central clearinghouse for all local environmental events (such as recycling or household hazardous waste collection events, Earth Day or

America Recycles Day fairs, river cleanups, etc.) statewide. Local Earth's 911 coordinators are encouraged to review all currently posted information, especially the recycling dropoff sites and collection programs



listed within their jurisdiction to ensure accurate information is presented to the public.

Over 140 Earth's 911 coordinators

have already been designated by local governments in Georgia. Many are local recycling coordinators, solid waste officials, or Keep America Beautiful directors. By having one person identified to update recycling and conservation information for a community, it is hoped that they will help make the Earth's 911 Web site and phone directory more accurate. Also, the local Earth's 911 outreach coordinator may become more widely recognized as a local authority on questions of waste reduction, reuse and recycling. Local coordinators will be receiving periodic updates about training and funding opportunities that may become available to support this campaign. DCA can provide brochures explaining the benefits of the Earth's 911 program for local distribution. If you would like to learn more about this effort, please send email to jdunlop@dca.state.ga.us, or call Joe Dunlop at 404-679-1598.

Brought One for the Chipper

This holiday season Keep Georgia Beautiful celebrated the 13th anniversary of its popular, national award-winning Bring One for the Chipper Christmas tree recycling

program. In communities across the state, local Keep America Beautiful affiliates staffed local drop-off sites Saturday, January 3rd. In exchange for organizing and staffing the events,

and arranging for beneficial reuse of the trees, organizers received promotional assistance from Keep Georgia Beautiful and free tree seedlings to distribute to program participants.

In 2003, the program recycled more than 289,000 trees and involved over 4,000 volunteers. The numbers are still out for 2004, but early returns promise a continuation of Georgia's participation in the national tree recycling program. For the 2004 event, more than 130 organizations staffed 424 drop-off sites statewide. Since the program's inception in 1991 more than 3 million trees have been recycled and more than 1 million seedlings have been distributed. The Chipper program receives financial support through Georgia's Solid Waste Trust Fund and its corporate sponsors, The Home Depot, Davey Tree Company, WXIA 11-Alive TV and Keep Georgia Beautiful.

For more information about Bring One for the Chipper, visit www.KeepGeorgiaBeautiful.org or contact Sarah Visser at svisser@dca.state.ga.us or 404-679-4853.



2003 Solid Waste Management Report available

Tracking solid waste management trends and identifying potential problems on a statewide and regional basis is a major responsibility of the Department of Community Affairs. The primary tool for producing both a snapshot of solid waste management in Georgia and identifying trends is the annual Solid Waste Management Survey and Full Cost Report. This survey is sent to all city and county governments in Georgia. Responses are compiled by DCA and combined with landfill disposal and remaining disposal capacity data from the Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division. The data is analyzed and distilled into the Solid Waste Management Annual Report.

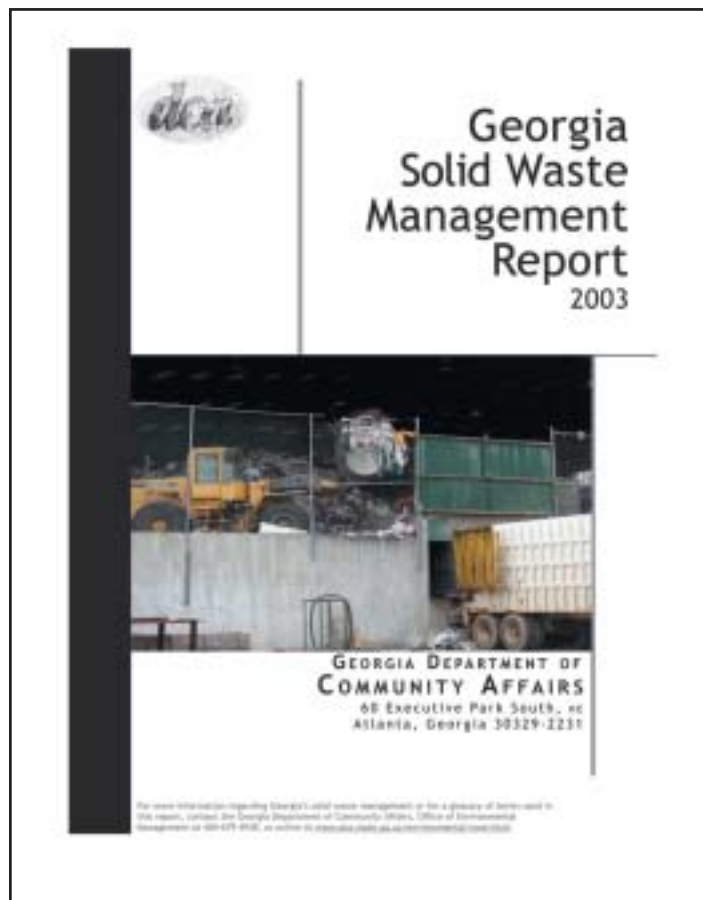
More than 14.2 million tons of waste entered Georgia's permitted landfills during FY 2003, up from about 13 million tons in FY 2002, according to the EPD. Most of the increase was from Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) disposal, which rose from 10.2 million tons in FY 2002 to 11.1 million tons in FY 2003. The amount of waste brought to Georgia for disposal also climbed, from 950,000 tons to 1.2 million tons.

The addition of two new MSW landfills kept the state's disposal capacity about the same, but the addition of five new Construction and Demolition waste landfills raised disposal capacity by approximately 26%.

Collection of residential yard trimmings fell slightly during the most recent reporting year. Banned from MSW landfills since 1996, yard trimmings are most often either disposed of in inert, unregulated landfills or ground into mulch for beneficial reuse.

Landfill tipping fees for MSW fell slightly to \$33.26 per ton in 2003, but a significant increase in the amount of C&D waste disposed in the Atlanta area, coupled with increased diversion of C&D from some MSW landfills, led to a climb in the C&D tipping fee from \$21.47 per ton in 2002 to \$28.16 per ton in 2003. These prices reflect posted gate rates charged by landfills, and haulers or governments with contracts often secure prices far below the posted gate rates.

During FY 2003, nearly \$4.9 million in Solid Waste Trust Fund dollars went to local governments in grants or loans. The Environmental Protection Division disbursed



nearly \$1.7 million in Local Government Enforcement and Education grants to 52 communities, and the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority disbursed \$593,000 in Recycling and Waste Reduction grants to 21 communities. Also, GEFA gave two low-interest loans totaling \$2.4 million to help two local governments expand and manage their landfills.

The 2003 Solid Waste Management Report and past reports are available online at www.dca.state.ga.us/environmental/swar.html For questions about the report, or to obtain printed copies, contact Joe Dunlop at jdunlop@dca.state.ga.us or 404-679-1598.

Statewide Waste Composition Study Underway

In June of 2003, DCA hired R.W. Beck, a nationally recognized solid waste management consulting firm, to conduct a statewide waste disposal characterization study. The year-long study will use a process known as 'waste sorts' to examine the types of waste disposed throughout Georgia.

Workers will analyze the contents of individual truck loads of waste at eight designated landfills around the

state. The sorts will be performed during each season to capture the seasonal nature of waste disposal habits. Approximately 600 waste sorts will be completed by the end of the project. The information from the sorts will then be added to a database to be used by state and local governments to characterize waste stream in various parts of the state. The waste characterization will help local governments target specific components of

the waste stream for waste diversion to achieve the state's 25% per capita Municipal Solid Waste disposal reduction goal.

The waste sorts are expected to be completed by July 2004, with a final report to follow in September. For more information, contact Randy Hartmann at rhartman@dca.state.ga.us or 404-679-4816.

GEFA Grants Build Recycling Capacity

Due to Fiscal Year 2003's trying budget environment, the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority was only able to issue \$500,500 in Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant receipts. Eight projects were funded for the improvement of recycling infrastructure in Georgia communities for a total of \$425,500. This year was the first year in which material collection trucks were fundable, and three vehicles were funded. Peach County will be able to replace its 1979 U-Haul box van and the North Georgia Resources Management Authority received funding for a collection truck to be used in their new multi-county recycling dropoff program. In a good example of regional coopera-

tion in action, Polk County will receive funds toward a recycling truck that will enable them to haul recyclables to the Rome-Floyd Recycling Center.

2003 is also the first year for a new category of grant, the Facilities Assessment grant. These projects were solicited to assist communities evaluate their recycling and waste reduction infrastructure needs and plan for an efficient and logical evolution of local recycling and waste reduction efforts. Two facilities assessment grants were funded; one joint project between Wayne County and the City of Jesup, and a joint study in which the cities of Roswell and Alpharetta will plan their long-term growth in recycling and

examine opportunities to combine services. One demonstration facility was funded: the City of Snellville's efforts to build a recycling center office building out of completely recycled, renewable, and energy efficient building materials.

DCA staff are available to assist both in management of your current recycling challenges and planning of future expansions and grant requests. Please contact Joe Dunlop at jdunlop@dca.state.ga.us or 404-679-1598 if you have any questions about the assistance that DCA may provide to your recycling and waste reduction program.

SWTF Disbursements

Since 1993, EPD has collected a total of \$60,431,644 with \$59,054,537 having been appropriated to the Fund. Of these, \$52,728,356 has been spent, contractually obligated, or is pending obligation as follows:

- (a) \$10,474,373 in grants to local governments for enforcement and education;
- (b) \$3,653,023 in grants to local governments for cleanup events;

- (c) \$7,101,882 to state contractors for cleaning up large dumps;
- (d) \$12,432,418 to other state agencies to promote recycling and waste reduction, provide technical assistance, education, and grants to local governments;
- (e) \$2,875,220 for market research, development and innovative technology grants;
- (f) \$859,064 for specialized cleanups, and

- public health related activities;
- (g) \$9,751,376 for program operating cost, including funds to the Pollution Prevention Division to expand market development and commercial waste reduction programs, and
- (h) \$5,581,000 are pending obligations that include several unforeseen scrap tire cleanups, solving several landfill problems, and for other emergencies.

Trust Fund cont'd

Environmental Protection Division collects about \$6.5 million per year in fees and fines, which are deposited to the Treasury and then appropriated to the Trust Fund. The fee sunsets June 30, 2005.

Since 1994, EPD has partnered with other state agencies and local governments to carry out the non-cleanup purposes of the Trust Fund. For example, the Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA) awards recycling and waste reduction grants to local governments; DCA has ongoing waste reduction and recycling programs; the Pollution Prevention Assistance Division (P2AD) provides technical assistance about waste prevention, reduction and recycling; the Department of Corrections (DOC) is expanding its environmental protection programs, and the DNR, Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) assists EPD with scrap tire and solid waste management enforcement and education in the more rural counties.

Benefits of the Solid Waste Trust Fund

- The regulatory program provides tire retailers with an economical means of assuring that the scrap tires they generate are properly recycled in compliance with state law;
- The stable customer base and favorable regulatory environment have made Georgia an attractive location for tire recycling businesses. Customers from surrounding states use Georgia tire processors to satisfy corporate recycling policies and eliminate future liabilities for landfilled tires. Processing out-of-state tires brings 3 to 4 million dollars of additional revenue to Georgia companies. Companies that produce tire-derived products also generate jobs and revenue for the state;
- The fund supports corrective action by EPD at abandoned solid waste facilities that would otherwise be blights on Georgia communities;
- Grant programs support over 50 code enforcement positions in local the community level;
- The fund provides waste reduction grants to local government that create needed infrastructure and jobs while reducing Georgia's dependence on landfills;
- The fund supports the Keep Georgia Beautiful program;
- The fund provides research supporting innovative waste management technologies, reducing the costs for waste management to Georgia citizens and businesses; and
- The fund supports statewide conservation education programs that teach Georgians stewardship for their environment.

WaterFirst cont'd

criteria and subject matter to be dealt with were right on target. Following the stakeholder committee's decision to move forward, work groups were formed for each component of the program. The requirements of each component were reviewed and approved by a statewide team of experts before the initial applications were sent to every local government in the state. Applications required that communities look at their water resource achievements and consider which areas needed additional work.

The WaterFirst Program is organized into three major program areas: Water Quality and Quantity Management; Water Supply Planning and Development; and Wastewater Management. Within each component, requirements are specified for meeting the WaterFirst designation. Each year, a class of participants is selected by a review committee and technical assistance is provided to the selected communities or WaterFirst "class." However, communities do not have to participate in a WaterFirst

instructional class to gain the designation. Following designation, a case study will be created for each WaterFirst Community enabling the "lessons learned" to be easily disseminated to other communities seeking to better protect and manage water resources.

From the first round of applications, three communities were invited to present their water programs to a review panel for WaterFirst designation, and on September 2, 2003, Governor Perdue designated Clayton County and its partners, Gwinnett County, and the City of Savannah as WaterFirst communities. Eleven other communities are part of the inaugural class: Lee County, Jesup, Richmond Hill, Hartwell, Fairburn, and the multi-jurisdictional partnerships of Flowery Branch, Gainesville and Hall County; and Eatonton and Putnam and Baldwin counties. Applications for the WaterFirst Class of 2004 have been reviewed and an announcement of those selected to participate in the program is expected very soon.

WaterFirst encourages communities to look beyond their own political boundaries and recognize the inextricable links that shared water resources create. Working in partnership with surrounding communities will enable watershed level issues to be addressed, as well as local, more specific concerns. We all live downstream, and our actions, particularly when it comes to our water resources, do affect those around us.

For more information on the WaterFirst Community Program, contact Leigh Askew at laskew@dca.state.ga.us or by phone at 404-679-4998.

Footnote

1 The Georgia Water Management Campaign was established by the Association County Commissioners of Georgia, Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority and Environmental Protection Division to enhance local governments' ability to manage and protect water resources by translating water management policies into local government decision making capabilities, guidance, and technical assistance.

2004 Great American Cleanup

This April, Keep America Beautiful and Keep Georgia Beautiful are inviting organizations to make their communities cleaner, healthier and safer places to live by joining the nation's largest organized community improvement campaign, the Great American Cleanup. Signup forms for the 2004 event are due by February 16. Forms should be mailed to:

Keep Georgia Beautiful
60 Executive Park South, N.E.
Atlanta, Ga. 30039
Attn: Sarah Visser

Online registration is available under the 'forms' section of the Keep Georgia Beautiful Web site, www.KeepGeorgiaBeautiful.org.

The 2003 Great American Cleanup was extremely successful in Georgia; here's a look at some of the results:

119,384	volunteer hours
38,699	volunteers
3,300	tons of trash
3,164	miles of roadway
251	local organizations
175	illegal dumpsites
124	counties

Keep Georgia Beautiful would like to extend our thanks to all of those who volunteered their time and talent to make last year's Great American Cleanup a tremendous success, and we look forward to your participation in 2004.

For more information about the Great American Cleanup, contact Sarah Visser at svisser@dca.state.ga.us or 404-679-4853.



60 Executive Park South, N.E.
Atlanta, Ga. 30329-2231
404-679-4940
www.dca.state.ga.us/environmental

If you would like to be removed from or
added to our mailing list, or would
prefer to receive this publication in
electronic (pdf) format, please contact
Joe Dunlop at 404-679-1598 or
jdunlop@dca.state.ga.us

Office of Environmental Management



You Can't Tear Tyvek, but DuPont will Take It

Don't put that Tyvek envelope in the paper recycling bin. DuPont has an infrastructure in place for recycling its tear-resistant envelopes. **For small quantities** of 25 or fewer envelopes each month, simply turn the envelope inside out, and stuff the other used Tyvek envelopes inside. Mail the envelope to:

Terry Fife-Tyvek Recycling
5401 Jefferson Davis Hwy.
Spot 197 Room 231
Richmond, VA 23234

For medium quantities of more than 25 but fewer than 500 envelopes each month, call 1-800-44-Tyvek and ask about DuPont's pouch program for recycling Tyvek envelopes. Each pouch holds approximately 200 envelopes. Collect your envelopes in the pouch and forward them to a regional recycler, whose address label is provided.

For larger quantities of more than 500 envelopes each month, call 1-800-222-5676 to have a program set up working with local recyclers in Georgia.

By recycling Tyvek, you'll help start another loop in the recycling cycle; Tyvek envelopes are made from 25%

recycled milk jugs.

<http://www.tyvek.com/na/medicalpack/english/contact/recycle.html>

